

Message Text

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ACTION HA-05

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 IO-13 ISO-00 ABF-01 OMB-01 TRSE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1030

INFO USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SREF UNHCR AO CG

SUBJ: US ASSISTANCE TO CABINDAN AND ANGOLAN REFUGEES IN ZAIRE

REF: A. STATE 164625, B. KINSHASA 7344, C. KINSHASA 2625,

D. KINSHASA 6359, E. STATE 91958

1. SUMMARY: EMBASSY HAS HAD FURTHER DISCUSSIONS WITH UNHCR REP SICOTTE CONCERNING REFUGEE NEEDS WHICH MIGHT BE MET BY UTILIZATION OF BALANCE OF \$100,000 PRESIDENTIAL DETERMINATION FUNDS. WHILE THIS \$100,000 CAN USEFULLY BE EMPLOYED TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO CABINDAN REFUGEES IN ZAIRE, SICOTTE FEELS THAT THE MORE RECENT INFUX OF ANGOLAN REFUGEES TO THE CATARACTES REGION OF BAS ZAIRE PRESENTS A GRAVER PROBLEM. EMBASSY AGREES AND RECOMMENDS GIVING MAXIMUM FLEXIBILITY TO REFUGEE EXPERTS ON THE SPOT BY NOT SPECIFICALLY TYING THESE FUNDS TO EITHER PROGRAM. END SUMMARY.

2. AS NOTED IN PREVIOUS EMBASSY REPORTING, THE REFUGEE SITUATION IN ZAIRE CAN AND DOES CHANGE QUICKLY EVEN THOUGH THE OVERALL LEVEL OF NEED REMAINS HIGH. WHILE UNHCR HAS VARIOUS SOURCES OF FUNDS AND OFFERS OF ASSISTANCE, THESE ARE FREQUENTLY TIED TO PARTICULAR PROJECTS OR REQUIREMENTS. ACCORDING TO A CENSUS JUST TAKEN JOINTLY BY UNHCR AND GOZ, 44,507 OF THE RECENTLY ARRIVED

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ANGOLAN REFUGEES (REF C) HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED LIVING WITHIN 20 KILOMETERS OF THE ANGOLAN FRONTIER IN THE SONGOLO AND MBANZA-NGUNGU DISTRICTS OF THE CATARACTES AREA. SHORTFALLS IN ANTICIPATED SUPPORT FROM UNHCR GENEVA HAVE MADE IT NECESSARY FOR UNHCR KINSHASA TO POSTPONE CATARACTES RESETTLEMENT PROJECT (REF D). EXPECTED GOZ RELEASES OF COUNTERPART FUNDS (REF E) WILL HELP MEET SOME OF THE IMMEDIATE NEEDS OF THESE REFUGEES, BUT MANY ITEMS

CANNOT BE PURCHASED LOCALLY.

3. AS THE DEPT IS AWARE, EMB KINSHASA HAD SERIOUS RESERVATIONS ABOUT UNHCR OPERATIONS IN ZAIRE UNDER ITS PREVIOUS LOCAL DIRECTOR. WITH THE ARRIVAL OF SICOTTE, THESE RESERVATIONS HAVE DISAPPEARED. NOT ONLY DOES SICOTTE WORK WELL WITH LOCAL RES OF DONOR GOVTS AND THE GOZ, HE ALSO WORKS SMOOTHLY AND EASILY WITH LOCAL REPS OF VOLUNTARY AGENCIES SUCH AS ERJAVEC OF THE INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE (IRC). SICOTTE HAS EVEN SUGGESTED THAT HE WOULD LIKE TO TURN OVER UNHCR FUNDS TO IRC SHOULD IRC BE ABLE TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL PERSONNEL TO MEET REFUGEE NEEDS IN THE CATARACTES AREA. AMPLIFYING THIS POINT, SICOTTE SAID HE WOULD LIKE TO USE IRC TO DISTRIBUTE AID TO REFUGEES LIVING WITHIN 20 KILOMETERS OF ANGOLAN BORDER WHILE UNHCR STICKS TO ITS TRADITIONAL ROLE OF HELPING REFUGEES BECOME SELF-SUFFICIENT FURTHER FROM THE FRONTIER. IN SHORT, EMBASSY FEELS UNHCR AND VOLAGS COMPLEMENT RATHER THAN COMPETE WITH EACH OTHER.

4. RECOMMENDATION: EMBASSY HAS ALREADY RECOMMENDED THAT THE BALANCE OF PRESIDENTIAL DETERMINATION FUNDS BE ALLOCATED TO UNHCR (REF B). UNLESS THERE IS SOME STATUTORY OR OTHER LIMITATION OF WHICH WE ARE UNAWARE, EMBASSY URGES THAT THE FUNDS BE TRANSFERRED TO UNHCR WITHOUT LIMITING THEIR USE TO CABINDAN REFUGEE ASSISTANCE. WE WOULD LIKE TO ALLOW THE LOCAL UNHCR REP TO DECIDE HOW TO ALLOCATE FUNDS BETWEEN THE CABINDAN AND ANGOLAN REFUGEES IN BAS ZAIRE BASED ON HIS FIRST-HAND KNOWLEDGE OF THEIR RESPECTIVE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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NEEDS AND TYPES OF AVAILABLE EXTERNAL ASSISTANCE ALREADY AVAILABLE. EMBASSY WILL, OF COURSE, CONTINUE TO MONITOR CLOSELY REFUGEE SITUATION AND UNHCR PERFORMANCE IN MEETING REFUGEE NEEDS. CUTLER

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